# **Abraham Flexner**

# A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

**Prepared by Michael Spangler** 



## **Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

Washington, D.C.

### 2000

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2004-07-23 converted from EAD 1.0 to EAD 2002

## **Collection Summary**

Title: Papers of Abraham Flexner

**Span Dates:** 1865-1989 **Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1900-1959)

**ID No.:** MSS20834

Creator: Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959

Extent: 12,500 items; 35 containers; 14 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Educational reformer and author. Correspondence, research files, speeches and writings, and miscellany

pertaining to Abraham Flexner's work in medical education and administration of educational foundations.

### **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

#### Names:

Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959

Bamberger, Louis, 1855-1944--Correspondence

Barrett, John D., 1903-1981--Correspondence

Bluestone, E. Michael (Ephraim Michael), 1891-1979--Correspondence

Bosworth, Welles, 1869-1966--Correspondence

Boyd, W. R. (William Robert), 1864-1950--Correspondence

Buttrick, Wallace, 1853-1926--Correspondence

Cairns, Huntington, 1904- -- Correspondence

Clark, Evans--Correspondence

Courant, Richard, 1888-1972--Correspondence

Cullen, Thomas Stephen, 1868-1953--Correspondence

Dodds, Harold W. (Harold Willis), 1889-1980--Correspondence

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955--Correspondence

Flexner, Anne Crawford, 1874-1955--Correspondence

Flexner, Bernard, 1865-1945--Correspondence

Flexner, Eleanor, 1908- -- Correspondence

Flexner, Hortense, 1885- -- Correspondence

Flexner, James Thomas, 1908- -- Correspondence

Flexner, Jean Atherton--Correspondence

Fosdick, Raymond Blaine, 1883- -- Correspondence

Getty, Robert J. (Robert John)--Correspondence

Gottmann, Jean--Correspondence

Hanus, Paul H. (Paul Henry), b. 1855--Correspondence

Haskins, Caryl Parker, 1908- -- Correspondence

Hyde, James Hazen, 1876-1959--Correspondence

Learned, William S. (William Setchel), 1876-1950--Correspondence

Lehman, Herbert H. (Herbert Henry), 1878-1963--Correspondence

Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974--Correspondence

Lowe, E. A. (Elias Avery), 1879-1969--Correspondence

Mantoux, Paul, 1877-1956--Correspondence

Markham, Violet R. (Violet Rosa)--Correspondence

McKittrick, Thomas H.--Correspondence

Mellon, Paul--Correspondence

Meritt, Benjamin Dean, 1899- -- Correspondence

Nevins, Allan, 1890-1971--Correspondence

Rockefeller, John D. (John Davison), 1874-1960--Correspondence

Rosenwald, Julius, 1862-1932--Correspondence

Rosenwald, Lessing J. (Lessing Julius), 1891-1979--Correspondence

Rusk, Dean, 1909- -- Correspondence

Sedgwick, Ellery, 1872-1960--Correspondence

Welch, William Henry, 1850-1934--Correspondence

Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955--Correspondence

Woodward, E. L. (Ernest Llewellyn), Sir, 1890- -- Correspondence

United States. Light-House Board

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Ford Foundation--Correspondence

General Education Board (New York, N.Y.)

Pritchett, Henry S. (Henry Smith), 1857-1939. Correspondence of Henry S. Pritchett (1901-1910)

### **Subjects:**

Education

Educational change

Medical education--Canada

Medical education--United States

Research

#### **Occupations:**

Authors

Educators

Reformers

### **Administrative Information**

#### **Provenance:**

The papers of Abraham Flexner, educational reformer and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Flexner in 1954. Additional material was given by Flexner's daughters, Eleanor Flexner and Jean Flexner Lewinson, from 1961 to 1990. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching gave additional items to the Library in 1965.

#### **Processing History:**

The papers of Abraham Flexner were organized in 1965. Additional material given in 1974 was processed in 1984. Unprocessed restricted material given in 1961 and items received between 1986 and 1990 were incorporated into the collection in 2000.

#### **Copyright Status:**

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Abraham Flexner in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

### **Preferred Citation:**

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Abraham Flexner Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## **Biographical Note**

Date Event

1866, Nov. 13 Born, Louisville, Ky.

1886 B.A., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

Appointed teacher, Louisville High School, Louisville, Ky.

1890-1905 Established and directed college preparatory school, Louisville, Ky.

1898	Married Anne Laziere Crawford (died 1959)
1906	M.A., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1907-1908	Studied at the University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany
1908	Published <i>The American College: A Criticism</i> (New York: The Century Co. 237 pp.) Joined the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
1910	Published <i>Medical Education in the United States and Canada</i> (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 346 pp.)
1913-1925	Assistant secretary and secretary, General Education Board
1925-1928	Director, Division of Studies and Medical Education, General Education Board
1928	Delivered Rhodes Trust memorial lectures, Oxford, England
1930-1939	Director, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
1940-1959	Director emeritus, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
1952	Published with the collaboration of Esther S. Bailey <i>Funds and Foundations: Their Policies Past and Present</i> (NewYork: Harper & Bros. 146 pp.)
1959, Sept. 21	Died, Falls Church, Va.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Abraham Flexner (1866-1959) span the years 1865-1989 with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1900-1959. The collection is organized into the following series: <u>Correspondence</u>, <u>Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching</u>, <u>Miscellany</u>, and <u>Addition</u>.

The Correspondence File includes family and general correspondence. Family correspondence consists primarily of Flexner's letters to his wife, playwright Anne Crawford Flexner, and their daughters Jean Atherton Flexner and Eleanor Flexner. General correspondence includes letters exchanged with a wide range of correspondents reflecting Flexner's activities in educational reform and his work with foundations to expand research and educational opportunities. Significant and frequent correspondents include Louis Bamberger, John D. Barrett, E. Michael Bluestone, Welles Bosworth, W. R. Boyd, Wallace Buttrick, Huntington Cairns, Evans Clark, Richard Courant, Thomas S. Cullen, Harold W. Dodds, Albert Einstein, Bernard Flexner, Raymond Blaine Fosdick, Robert J. Getty, Jean Gottmann, Paul H. Hanus, Caryl Parker Haskins, James Hazen Hyde, William S. Learned, Herbert H. Lehman, Charles A. Lindbergh, E. A. Lowe, Paul Mantoux, Violet R. Markham, Thomas H. McKittrick, Benjamin Dean Meritt, Allan Nevins, John D. Rockefeller (1874-1960), Julius Rosenwald, Dean Rusk, Ellery Sedgwick, William Henry Welch, Hermann Weyl, and Sir E. L. Woodward.

The <u>Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching</u> series contains material pertaining to Flexner's work with the foundation and includes research files for his work, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada* (1910). Impressed with Flexner's critical writings on higher education, Carnegie Foundation president Henry S. Pritchett hired Flexner in 1908 to study and report on the status of education in the medical profession. Significant for its frank and unflattering appraisal of medical training, the report effected numerous changes in medical schools and established Flexner as an authority in the field. The <u>medical education files</u> include correspondence, reports, and notes relating to the universities and schools Flexner examined. The <u>general correspondence</u> chiefly documents Flexner's continuing relations with the foundation after he had been appointed secretary of the General Education Board, an educational fund created by John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937). The series also includes correspondence of Henry S. Pritchett pertaining to his service as a

civilian representative on the <u>Light-House Board of the Department of Commerce and Labor</u> from 1901 to 1910. Flexner published *Henry S. Pritchett: A Biography* in 1943. Pritchett's papers are also in the Manuscript Division. The <u>Addition</u> series has extensive family correspondence and includes letters between Flexner and his wife and daughters.

The correspondence is mostly personal with occasional discussions of world and national politics, literary publications, cultural events, and research projects. Correspondents include Bernard Flexner, Hortense Flexner, and James Thomas Flexner. A small group of general correspondence primarily from Flexner's retirement years documents his undiminished interest in educational foundations and their activities. Significant and frequent correspondents include the Ford Foundation, Paul Mellon, Lessing J. Rosenwald, and Sir E. L. Woodward. A speeches and writings file contains printed and typescript versions of articles and lectures, a memoir of the Flexner family, and writings about Flexner.

## **Organization of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in four series:

- Correspondence File, 1876-1961, n.d.
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935, n.d.
- Miscellany, 1865-1962, n.d.
- Addition, 1888-1989, n.d.

# **Description of Series**

Container	Series
BOX 1-18	Correspondence File, 1876-1961, n.d.
	Letters received and copies of letters sent.
	Arranged as received, with family correspondence organized chronologically and general correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, or topic and chronologically thereunder.
вох 18-25	Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935, n.d.
вох 18-19	General Correspondence, 1909-1935
	Letters received and copies of letters sent.
	Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
вох 19-24	Medical Education File, 1873-1912, n.d. See also Container 13, same heading
	Correspondence, reports, notes, and printed matter.
	Arranged alphabetically by name of institution and chronologically thereunder.
вох 24-25	Light-House Board, United States Department of Commerce and Labor, 1901-1910
	Letters received and copies of letters sent by Henry S. Pritchett.
	Arranged chronologically.
BOX 25-26	Miscellany, 1865-1962, n.d.
	Writings, birthday greetings, family papers, testimonials, photographs, clippings, and printed matter.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.
<b>BOX</b> 27-35	Addition, 1888-1989, n.d.
	Family and general correspondence and speeches and writings, including articles, lectures, contracts, notebooks, and printed matter.
	Correspondence including letters received and copies of letters sent is arranged alphabetically
	1

by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Speeches and writings file is arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.

# **Container List**

Container	Contents
вох 1-18	Correspondence File, 1876-1961, n.d.  Letters received and copies of letters sent.  Arranged as received, with family correspondence organized chronologically and general correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, or topic and chronologically thereunder.
вох 1	Family
	1905-1917 (19 folders)
вох 2	1918-1921 (16 folders)
вох 3	1922-1930 (12 folders)
вох 4	1931-1939, n.d. (8 folders)
	General
	Anderson, Donald G., 1951-1957
	Atlantic Monthly, 1917-1937
	"A" miscellaneous, 1929-1958, n.d. (3 folders)
	Bamberger, Louis, 1939-1944 (2 folders)
вох 5	Barrett, John D., 1949-1958
	Bluestone, E. Michael, 1950-1958
	Bosworth, Welles, 1929-1951 (2 folders)
	Boyd, W. R., 1934-1954 (3 folders)
	Brissett, Vincent L. N., 1950-1956

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Buttrick, Wallace, 1912-1954
                              (2 folders)
                            Business education, 1951
                            "Ba-Bo" miscellaneous, 1931-1957, n.d.
                              (4 folders)
BOX 6
                            "Br-Bu" miscellaneous, 1924-1957, n.d.
                              (3 folders)
                            Cairns, Huntington, 1952-1957
                            Canada, lake property, 1929-1958
                              (5 folders)
                            Carnegie Corp. of New York, 1937-1957
                            Carruthers, Violet Markham, 1945-1958, n.d.
                            Chapman, R. W., and family, 1943-1955
                            Clark, Evans, 1951-1957
                            Courant, Richard, 1937-1957
BOX 7
                            Cullen, Thomas S., 1943-1956
                            "C" miscellaneous, 1913-1959
                              (5 folders)
                            Daniel Coit Gilman: Creator of the American Type of University, 1937-1952
                            Dillard, James H., 1930-1938
                            Dodds, Harold W., 1933-1957
                              (3 folders)
                            "Da-De" miscellaneous, 1933-1957, n.d.
                              (2 folders)
BOX 8
                            "Di-Dy" miscellaneous, 1944-1957
                            Einstein, Albert, and family, 1936-1955, n.d.
                            "E" miscellaneous, 1924-1957
                            Flexner, Bernard, 1928-1938
                              (2 folders)
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Fosdick, Raymond Blaine, 1924-1959
                            Funds and Foundations: Their Policies Past and Present, 1952
                            "Fa-Fre" miscellaneous, 1913-1959
                              (3 folders)
BOX 9
                            "Fri" miscellaneous, 1930-1958
                            Getty, Robert J., 1950-1952
                            Gottmann, Jean, 1952-1959
                            Greetings and awards, 1957-1959
                              (3 folders)
                            "G" miscellaneous, 1913-1958
                              (6 folders)
                            Hanus, Paul H., 1929-1947
                              (2 folders)
                            Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946-1955
BOX 10
                            Hardy, Lady Alice, 1935-1943
                            Harper's Magazine, 1931-1954
                            Haskins, Caryl Parker, 1950-1957
                            Henry S. Pritchett: A Biography, 1943-1944
                            Hyde, James Hazen, 1942-1959
                            "H" miscellaneous, 1908-1961, n.d.
                              (6 folders)
                            Industrial research, 1943-1944
BOX 11
                            Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J., 1937-1958, n.d.
                            "I" miscellaneous, 1908-1961, n.d.
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Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., 1908-1958

Jones, Thomas, 1954-1958

"J-K" miscellaneous, 1926-1959

BOX 12	Learned, Charlotte and William S., 1941-1958
	Leidesdorf, Samuel D., 1938-1958
	Lewinson, Paul, 1930-1936, n.d.
	Lehman, Herbert H., 1937-1957
	Lindbergh, Charles A., 1933
	Lowe, E. A., 1943-1958
	"L" miscellaneous, 1935-1959, n.d. (4 folders)
	Mantoux, Paul, 1948-1955 (2 folders)
	Markham, Violet R. See Container 6, Carruthers, Violet Markham
	McKittrick, Thomas H., 1950-1956
вох 13	Medical education, 1898-1955 <u>See also Containers 19-24, same heading</u> (2 folders)
	Meritt, Benjamin Dean, 1936-1958
	Moe, Henry Allen, 1945-1956
	"M" miscellaneous, 1912-1959, n.d. (6 folders)
	National Fund for Medical Education, 1955-1956
BOX 14	National Science Foundation, 1949-1954
	Nevins, Allan, 1940-1959, n.d. (5 folders)
	"N" miscellaneous, 1947-1958, n.d.
	Ontario Society of New York, New York, N.Y., 1954-1959
	"O-Pi" miscellaneous, 1928-1958 (2 folders)
BOX 15	"Po-Pu" miscellaneous, 1932-1957
	Rockefeller, John D. (1874-1960), and family, 1924-1955

Rockefeller Foundation, 1949-1957

Rosenwald, Julius, 1924-1957

Rusk, Dean, 1951-1956

Russel, Alice, 1932-1958

"R" miscellaneous, 1908-1958, n.d. (5 folders)

Schuman, Henry

1945-1948

BOX 16 1949-1958

Sedgwick, Ellery See same container, "S" miscellaneous, and Container 4, Atlantic Monthly

Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1938-1957

Stokes, Anson Phelps, 1931, 1956

"S" miscellaneous, 1876-1959, n.d. (8 folders)

"Ta-Th" miscellaneous, 1917-1958, n.d.

BOX 17 "Ti-Tw" miscellaneous, 1930-1956

Ulich, Robert, 1944-1956

University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1955-1956

"U-V" miscellaneous, 1916-1958, n.d.

Warren, Robert B., 1941-1955

Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., 1950-1957

Welch, William Henry, 1926-1950

Weyl, Hermann, 1942-1955

Wilmer, Re Lewis and William H., 1929-1948

Winternitz, Milton C., 1929-1948

Woodward, Sir E. L. and Lady F. M., 1951-1958

Container	Contents
вох 18	"W" miscellaneous, 1914-1958 (5 folders)
	Young, James W., 1951-1957, n.d.
	"Y-Z" miscellaneous, 1916-1958, n.d.
	Unidentified and fragmentary, 1921-1931, n.d.
вох 18-25	Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935, n.d.
вох 18-19	General Correspondence, 1909-1935
BOX 10-17	Letters received and copies of letters sent.
	Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
вох 18	B-L, 1919-1935
	(10 folders)
<b>BOX</b> 19	R-S, 1909-1935
201219	(7 folders)
	Unidentified, 1909-1930
вох 19-24	Medical Education File, 1873-1912, n.d. <u>See also Container 13, same heading</u>
	Correspondence, reports, notes, and printed matter.
	Arranged alphabetically by name of institution and chronologically thereunder.
вох 19	A-C, 1908-1911, n.d.
	(26 folders)
вох 20	D-I, 1898-1912, n.d.
	(19 folders)
BOX 21	J-M, 1898-1911, n.d.
	(16 folders)
вох 22	O-T, 1892-1910, n.d.
	(18 folders)
	U, 1873-1911, n.d.
	(2 folders)
BOX 23	(31 folders)
BOX 24	(3 folders)
	V-Y, 1895-1910, n.d.
	(12 folders)
вох 24-25	Light-House Board, United States Department of Commerce and Labor, 1901-1910
	Letters received and copies of letters sent by Henry S. Pritchett.
	Arranged chronologically.

Container	Contents
вох 24	1901, May-1909, Mar.
	(8 folders)
вох 25	1909, Apr1910, Aug.
	(6 folders)
вох 25-26	Miscellany, 1865-1962, n.d.
	Writings, birthday greetings, family papers, testimonials, photographs, clippings, and printed matter.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.
вох 25	Birthday greetings, 1956-1957
	Family members
	Flexner, Anne Crawford (wife), 1911-1913, 1955
	Flexner, Jacob, death, 1934
	Flexner, Simon, 1909-1910, n.d.
вох 26	Newspaper clippings, 1929-1962, n.d.
	Photographs, 1921-1950, n.d.
	Printed matter, 1929-1950, n.d.
	Testimonials and citations, 1909-1957, n.d.
	Writings, 1865-1955, n.d.
BOX 27-35	Addition, 1888-1989, n.d.
	Family and general correspondence and speeches and writings, including articles, lectures, contracts, notebooks, and printed matter.
	Correspondence including letters received and copies of letters sent is arranged alphabetically
	by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Speeches and writings file is arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.
вох 27	Correspondence
	Family
	Atherton, Cornelia, 1942-1958
	Crawford, Esteria, 1944-1950
	Flexner, Anne Crawford, 1912-1956, n.d.
	(8 folders)

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Flexner, Bernard, 1938-1945, n.d.
                              Flexner, Carolin A., 1944-1953
                              Flexner, Eleanor
                                 1921-1949
                                   (2 folders)
BOX 28
                                 1950-1959, n.d.
                                   (7 folders)
                              Flexner, Helen and Simon, 1920, 1937-1955, n.d.
                                 (2 folders)
                              Flexner, Hortense, and Wyncie King
                                 1925-1926, 1936-1953
                                   (4 folders)
BOX 29
                                 1954-1959, n.d.
                                   (6 folders)
                              Flexner, James Thomas, 1937-1957, 1983-1984
                              Flexner, Jean Atherton, and Paul Lewinson
                                 1922-1943
                                   (10 folders)
                                 1944-1955
BOX 30
                                   (15 folders)
BOX 31
                                 1956-1957, 1985-1987, n.d.
                                   (2 folders)
                              Flexner, Jennie M., 1930-1937, 1944
                              Flexner, John M., 1951-1958
                              Flexner, Kurt F., 1941-1953, n.d.
                              Flexner, Louis B. and Pepita, 1938-1957
                              Flexner, Mary, 1931-1947, n.d.
                              Flexner, Maurice, 1950-1953
                              Flexner, Morris, 1926-1958
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Flexner, Salina B., 1941-1957
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Flexner, Washington and Ida, 1942-1943

Flexner, William W., 1948-1958

Glasser, Esther and Joshua B., 1943-1956

Lewinson, Jean Flexner See Container 29, Flexner, Jean Atherton

Miscellaneous, 1945-1954

Rosenberg, Harry O. and Helena, 1944-1958, n.d.

#### General

"A" miscellaneous, 1949

Bailey, Esther S., 1945-1958

Bronk, Detlev W., 1948-1957

"B-C" miscellaneous, 1930-1960

DeTolnay, Charles, 1943-1957 (2 folders)

**BOX** 32

"D" miscellaneous, 1929-1954

Einstein, Albert, 1936, 1953

"E" miscellaneous, 1899-1959

Ford Foundation, 1948-1957 (3 folders)

"F-J" miscellaneous, 1921-1959, n.d.

Konefsky, Samuel J., 1946-1959

"K-L" miscellaneous, 1922-1957

Mellon, Paul, 1949-1958 (2 folders)

"M-N" miscellaneous, 1912-1958

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1947-1957

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"P" miscellaneous, 1908-1930
                              Rosenwald, Julius and Lessing J., 1919-1958
                                 (3 folders)
                               "R" miscellaneous, 1930-1950
                              Stewart, Walter W., 1939-1950
                               "S-V" miscellaneous, 1917-1959
BOX 33
                              White, Eirene, 1948-1957, n.d.
                               Woodward, Sir E. L. and Lady F. M., 1940-1947, 1957
                                 (5 folders)
                               "W-Y" miscellaneous, 1930-1956
                          Speeches and writings file
                            Articles and lectures
                              Printed, 1897-1950
                                 (4 folders)
BOX 34
                              Typescripts, 1917-1952, n.d.
                                 (9 folders)
                            Contracts, 1938-1960
                            Letters to the editor, 1888-1907, n.d.
                            Memoir of the Flexner family by Jean Atherton Flexner Lewinson, 1989
BOX 35
                            Notebooks, 1906-1908, 1949-1957
                              (3 folders)
                            Reviews of Flexner's Universities: American, English, German, 1930-1932
                              (2 folders)
                            Writings about Flexner, 1956-1988, n.d.
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